

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application or previous response to office action:

1-26. (Cancelled)

27. (Original) A method for applying electrical energy to tissue comprising:
positioning an active electrode adjacent to or in contact with tissue in the presence of electrically conductive fluid;
applying a sufficient high frequency voltage difference between the active electrode and a return electrode to vaporize a portion of the electrically conductive fluid such that the vaporized fluid and the active electrodes have a temperature below 100°C; and
effecting ablation of at least a portion of the tissue in contact with the vaporized fluid.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27 wherein the positioning step is carried out with platinum or platinum-iridium active electrodes.

29. (Original) The method of claim 27 further comprising applying a sufficient high frequency voltage difference between the active and return electrodes to generate energy of at least 3.5 eV within or around the vaporized fluid.

30. (Original) The method of claim 27 further comprising applying a sufficient high frequency voltage difference between the active and return electrodes to generate energy of at least 4.0 eV within or around the vaporized fluid.

31. (Original) The method of claim 27 further comprising applying a sufficient high frequency voltage difference between the active electrode and a return electrode to vaporize a portion of the electrically conductive fluid such that the vaporized fluid has a temperature below about 80°C.

32. (Original) The method of claim 32 comprising maintaining the active electrodes to a temperature below about 80°C.

33-36. (Cancelled)

37. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein vaporizing a portion of the electrically conductive fluid further comprises generating a plasma.

38. (New) The method of claim 37 wherein the effecting ablation step further comprises contacting the tissue with the plasma.

39. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein vaporizing a portion of the electrically conductive fluid further comprises generating a plasma at a location spaced away from the tissue.

40. (New) The method of claim 37 wherein the plasma is generated at a location spaced a distance of about 0.05 to 5 mm from the tissue, the method further comprising the step of accelerating ions from the plasma such that the ions contact the tissue.

41. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the effecting ablation step further comprises maintaining the active electrode at least 1.0 mm away from the tissue.

42. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the effecting ablation step further comprises maintaining the active electrode at least 2.0 mm away from the tissue.